

1557  
Fam  
Wisc.  
Missionary Soc

# AN APPEAL

FOR

## WORLD-WIDE EVANGELISM



For nearly nineteen centuries the vast majority of the populations of the globe have waited in vain for the gospel of redemption which was committed to the Christian Church. It was said most truthfully by the late Earl of Shaftesbury, that "the gospel might have been proclaimed to all nations a dozen times over if the Christian Church had been faithful to her trust." It is appalling to think that sixty generations of the unevangelized heathen world have perished in darkness since our Lord established and commissioned His Church as a living and aggressive force in the world. And of all the generations ours is the most guilty in proportion to its greater opportunities. We call upon all who love the Lord Jesus Christ to pray with all earnestness that the closing years of our century may be years of special harvest. In some mission fields it is already demonstrated that by the Spirit of God thousands may be gathered where there have only been hundreds or scores. Let us "ask great things of God and expect great things from God."

No age has compared with the present in the facility with which the populations of distant countries can be reached; or in the personal safety under which Christ's ambassadors may prosecute their work; or in the ap-

proachableness and cordiality of the people; or in the materials ready at hand to convey the message of salvation in an unknown tongue. The heart of India, Africa, and China are more rapidly reached than was the centre of our own continent a hundred years ago. A whole century of preparation has established the principles, furnished the appliances, and perfected the organization for a movement enlisting the whole Church of Christ.

### **The Whole Bible a Missionary Volume.**

We earnestly call upon every Christian to reëxamine the Word of God and see how every portion of it from Genesis to Revelation is instinct with the spirit of missions. It is a field book of universal conquest. The redemptory work of Christ, like a bow of heavenly promise, over-arches all its sacred records. The "promised seed of the woman" at the beginning appears again in its closing Revelation as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Its Alpha and Omega include the whole alphabet of redemption. All prophesy and all types point to the one sacrifice offered once for all, with a reversionary as well as a prospective efficacy, and embracing the ages. The promise to Abraham that in him should all nations be blessed, found its counterpart in John's vision of the redeemed "of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." The Gospel of Christ even as proclaimed in the Old Testament was not for any one age or for any one race. In the Councils of Eternity it was said to the world's Messiah, "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

Not only is Christ the Divine intercessor now; but He has always interceded. An eternal covenant is based upon His plea: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee. *Ask of Me*, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The decrees of God make the conversion of the world as certain as His throne! The gospels are simply a history of Divine fulfillments; the Acts of the Apostles are a continuous missionary record; the Epistles are missionary letters addressed to infant churches, and John in his prophetic vision anticipating the final triumph of the gospel declares "The kingdoms of this world *are* become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

But the most striking bond which identifies the work of missions with Redemption, is seen in the Divine commission of the Apostle to the Gentiles. The commission given to Paul (Acts xxvi: 18) followed almost the exact terms of Christ's own commission recorded in Isaiah xlii: 6, 7, and lxi: 1. In the Synagogue of Nazareth, Christ read these prophetic words as the credentials of His great mission to an apostate world. The word of God assures the work of God. All power is pledged to this triumph. All wisdom is concentrated on this problem. If, therefore, the Scriptural foundation of missions has been more or less overlooked, while this great cause has been looked upon as only a development of nineteenth century enterprise; if our inspiration has been drawn mainly from heroic examples of self-sacrifice or of distinguished success, let us repent of our error and turn back to the Word of God for its Divine prompting and its promise of omnipotent help.

### Our Marching Orders.

The command of our Lord to publish the Gospel to all the world is clear and explicit and admits of no com-

promise. His Great Commission was given on four different occasions and in four different forms: First. To His chosen band in the mountains of Galilee came His comprehensive command, "Go teach all nations." Second. On the Mount of Olives, immediately before His ascension. He demonstrated to His church the symmetry and proportions of her great mission to the nearer, the more distant, and the most distant fields alike, and all to be undertaken together. Third. Near Damascus He gave a commission which showed not to Paul only, but to the whole Church that her errand to the Gentiles is not merely that of a higher cultus or a better civilization, but a veritable deliverance from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Fourth. His command was given to Paul in a vision of the night, when not a real Macedonian but the risen Christ summoned His apostle to a wider sphere among the world-conquering races of Pagan Europe.

### No Need of Discouragement.

Possibly many in the Church of Christ are disheartened by those obstacles which arise in connection with the mission work. But have not obstacles appeared in every stage of the Christian conquest? What discouragements confronted the labors of the Apostolic Church, whose greatest successes were wrested from the persecutions which scattered abroad the disciples as chaff before the wind, but which under God proved rather a seed-sowing of the truth far and near. How were the churches of the first four centuries overwhelmed by heathen persecution?

We meet obstacles in the restrictive measures of non-Christian governments; in the false philosophies of proud old systems; in the disturbing influences of false representatives of our own Christian land in all heathen

marts; in the corrupting contact of pernicious commerce in opium, or whiskey, or fire-arms; in the prevalence of Anglo-Saxon vices where only truth and righteousness should be disseminated; in the over-reaching of more powerful nations against the weaker tribes and races; in unjust legislation and the abrogation of solemn treaties; in the efforts of our own western infidelity to thwart the teachings of the truth wherever missionaries have proclaimed it.

But what are all these obstacles compared with those which have appeared again and again in the history of the Church? What have we to compare with the overthrow of the sainted Augustine and his North African Churches by Vandal incursions? If all our difficulties and discouragements were summed up together, they would not equal the Huguenot massacres and exiles, and yet that fierce persecution sent Christian colonists to many lands. In the British Isles, from which we have sprung, Christianity was once well-nigh extirpated by our own savage ancestors. And again in the eighth and ninth centuries, when missionary zeal and labor had reëstablished the truth, it was almost overwhelmed by the incursions of the Norsemen, and the religious institutions that had been established around the coast of Ireland and Scotland were swept as with the besom of destruction, yet what hath God wrought in and through the British Isles? Shall we then in this age, with all the power that God has placed at our disposal, be discouraged and lose faith or relax effort on account of the difficulties that arise in our path? If the truth be told one obstacle now outweighs all others; it is found, not in outside oppositions, but in the worldliness and apathy of the church herself. If she were to rise up to the full measure of her power, all the opposing forces of earth and hell could not resist her triumphant march.

## Missionary Success an Earnest of Divine Favor.

There is no sublimer story in human history than that which sketches the majestic march of the Christian faith from Jerusalem and Judea to Arabia, Egypt and Africa, to Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, and through the whole Roman Empire; and thence northward and westward, till French and Spaniards, English and Germans, Scandinavians and Slavonians were enlightened and modern Europe was won; and thence across the ocean to the New World; and from the Old World and the New to all the East and South among the mighty Pagan peoples of Asia and Africa and the islands of the sea. And in this march the Church has simply been fulfilling the great prophecies and realizing the grand promises of Scripture. The foreign missionary work of our day represents the later stages of this world-wide movement, and is as clearly under the inspiration and leadership of Jesus Christ as the work of Paul in Asia, and of James in Palestine. Nothing in all the Christian era has given a greater proof of God's favor and blessing than the success of this closing century. In the first hundred years after Christ's ascension only about five hundred thousand nominal Christians received the faith. During the one hundred years of modern missions over three millions have accepted Christianity as the true religion and have been converted from their ancestral errors to the faith as it is in Jesus Christ.

The conversion of the Sandwich Islands, the New Hebrides, the Fiji Islands, the Georgia and Friendly Islands, Australia, and many other islands of the sea, affords the clearest evidence of God's favor. They are standing miracles of blessing and success. The annual average of conversions in Africa is 17,000 souls. Fifty years ago there were but six Protestant Christians and two native helpers in China; now there are 50,000 com-

municants, 1,700 native helpers, and 18,000 youths in Christian schools. Japan has 35,000 professing Christians won in twenty-two years.

India is experiencing a Pentecostal outpouring. In the past three years 60,000 heathens have turned from idols to Jesus Christ and been baptized in the missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The North India Conference has more Sunday-school scholars than any Conference of that Church in the United States. The great work of the Baptist Missions in Telegu during the past fifteen years, shows the blessing of a wonder-working God.

The Bible as a whole, or in portions, has been translated into more than 300 different languages or dialects—much the larger part of this work having been done by missionaries—so that probably four-fifths of the uncivilized population of the world may read or hear, in their own tongue, of the inspired word of God.

But the great work is but just begun. It is only a score of years since Livingstone ended his adventurous life service on his knees near Lake Banguelo, and laid the evangelization of Africa upon the heart of the Christian world. Then mission stations were numerous on the coast, but there were scarcely half a dozen in the interior. During this brief interval Christian missionaries have pressed toward the interior of the continent from the north and the south, from the east and from the west; and still the doors of opportunity open more rapidly than the zeal of Christian nations can enter them.

### Our Manifold Obligations.

We beg leave to present in briefest form some of the obligations that have been laid upon us who live in this age of the world. First of all is the command of our

blessed Master, accompanied by the fact of His own Divine example of sacrifice for the salvation of others.

Second. Our obligation to those early missionaries who bore the gospel to our own ancestors who, long after New Testament times, were in the depths of barbarism.

Third. Our indebtedness to those missionaries and missionary settlers who bore the gospel to this continent, and planted those religious institutions whose beneficent influence we have enjoyed from our childhood. Freely have we received; let us freely give.

Fourth. The duty which rests upon us to follow up the noble work of the pioneers of modern missions who lived down the opposition of a worldly Christian sentiment at home, and overcame heathen prejudice abroad; who translated the Word of God into hundreds of languages, and laid many foundations for us to build upon; and many of whom sealed their labors with their lives in fields where there is now free access.

Fifth. We owe a debt to those who more recently have gone from our own communities and churches, and from our own circles of kindred, and who now in the heat and burden of the day demand our sympathy, our prayers, and our support. To follow up the work of all these is now easy. We have the opportunity, the facilities, and the means. How can we excuse ourselves if we selfishly squander our lives and our possessions and die with this accumulated duty unfilled?

### Union Against Unjust Criticism.

There is need just now for union in missions as a matter of common defense. It is an age which, through various forms of literature, boldly challenges the supreme claims of Christianity in its doctrines, teachings, and its work. The cause of foreign missions is espe-



cially liable to assailment, as it is far off, and therefore may more safely be made the subject of ignorant ridicule. It may be impossible to convince the outside world that such representations are erroneous; but the whole membership of the churches should be made intelligent to the end that they "may be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

The Disciples of Christ now number nearly a million. They are among the most intelligent of all classes of citizens. They are moved by the highest principles, and their effort for the evangelization and uplifting of all mankind is the very noblest and most inspiring of human enterprises. They have an average degree of wealth and influence. If by their common belief and teachings, their harmony of plans and methods, their union in such forms of appeal or published facts and statements as shall instruct and inspire public sentiment, these great masses of Christian believers can be led to act as one united body, there will be presented a spectacle of Christian union and a volume of moral earnestness and power which will impress the nation and the world with the Divine reality of the gospel.

### The Final Rally of the Century.

The eternal purpose of God is that the whole world should be evangelized. Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. We have His promise that every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight; and the rough ways smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. This promise is being fulfilled. Barriers that once seemed insuperable have been taken out of the way. Doors that

were closed for centuries are now open. Nations that sat in darkness, and sullenly and stubbornly rejected the gospel are now calling for it. God has honored us in inviting us to have fellowship with himself in the accomplishment of this grand design. We are doing something, but we have not begun to put forth our strength. We are playing at missions while a thousand millions are stumbling on the dark mountains and going down to the pit with none to deliver. From every field the cry comes for more men and more means. We ought to be able to respond with something better than apologies for our inability to supply what is needed. We must increase the efficiency of those in the field by thoroughly equipping them for the work. We must strengthen their hearts and hands by sending them the necessary reinforcements. We are able to do tenfold more than we are doing. Our offerings ought to increase by leaps and bounds, and not by the slow growth of past years. This is the hour of destiny; this is the nick of time. The harvest of the earth is over-ripe. It is for us to cast in the sickle and reap. May God help us to act up to the full measure of our opportunities and ability, that when the redeemed out of every nation and tribe, and tongue and people shall cast upon the jasper pavement their crowns of amaranth and gold, we may be found among them sharing in the universal joy.

---

[Issued by the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, Cincinnati, Ohio. One cent a copy, or fifty cents a hundred.]